



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **ILLINOIS GOVERNOR PAT QUINN, COMMISSION TO END HUNGER AND SHARE OUR STRENGTH LAUNCH ILLINOIS NO KID HUNGRY CAMPAIGN**

*Partnership Aiming to End Childhood Hunger and Connect Kids to Child Nutrition Programs Delivers on  
Recommendation Outlined in Illinois Commission to End Hunger Report*

**CHICAGO (Mar. 14, 2012)** – The Illinois Commission to End Hunger and [Share Our Strength](#)® released the Illinois Commission to End Hunger report and kicked off the Illinois No Kid Hungry® campaign on Wednesday by unveiling recommendations and a plan to connect Illinois kids to nutritious meals where they live, learn and play.

The Illinois No Kid Hungry campaign implements one of the key recommendations of the Illinois Commission to End Hunger report. The Illinois Commission to End Hunger was created through 2010 legislation and its members are appointed by Governor Pat Quinn. The Commission was charged with developing a two-year action plan to end hunger throughout Illinois.

“All our children need access to nourishing meals each and every day,” Governor Quinn said. “Increasing participation in child nutrition programs is the number one recommendation from the Illinois Commission to End Hunger report, and I support their work and mission. Elected officials, educators, nonprofits, community leaders, businesses and, of course, parents share a responsibility to make sure Illinois children are getting the food they need to grow up strong, smart and healthy.”

The Illinois No Kid Hungry campaign is a partnership between [Share Our Strength](#), the nation’s leading child anti-hunger organization, the Commission to End Hunger and the Greater Chicago Food Depository. The campaign aims to end childhood hunger by using proven strategies, including the first-year priorities of increasing access to federally-funded school breakfast and summer meal programs.

“The Commission is thrilled to bring the No Kid Hungry campaign to Illinois,” Commission to End Hunger Co-Chair and Greater Chicago Food Depository Executive Director and CEO Kate Maehr said. “Today marks the culmination of months of time and effort on the part of Commission members from across Illinois, but our work has only just begun. No Kid Hungry will help food banks and other partners across the state increase awareness of and access to federally funded programs for children. This is a big step toward alleviating hunger in Chicago and across Illinois.”

The Commission to End Hunger is comprised of government officials, food banks, community organizations and civic leaders from across Illinois. Following their appointment by Governor Quinn, the commissioners embarked on a statewide discovery process that led to the development of their report and two-year action plan.

“Transportation to DHS offices was a barrier to receiving benefits in rural communities,” Commissioner and Director of Jeremiah’s Food Pantry (Centreville) Marla Goodwin said. “Through public forums, we have been able to raise the awareness of the number of underserved residents in those communities as well as seek alternate methods of getting information out to the public. The information gathered was essential in determining a solution to end hunger in our state.”

A 2011 report from Feeding America found that more than 745,000 children in Illinois are at risk of hunger. That means that more than one in five of the state’s children live in families struggling to put food on the table. Studies also show that kids who face hunger can have trouble focusing and getting along in school, complaining often of headaches, stomachaches and other ailments. Children suffering from hunger fall behind in virtually every way.

“USDA is pleased to support Illinois’ No Kid Hungry effort,” USDA Food & Nutrition Service Midwest Regional Administrator Ollice Holden said. “As many Americans are trying to get back on their feet they may need additional support – especially when it comes to putting food on the table for their families. We have seen many hard-working Americans supplement their family’s nutrition with SNAP benefits to make ends meet. USDA programs and staff stand ready to support Illinois’ effort.”

The Illinois school breakfast program offers kids a nutritious breakfast so they can start their day off right. However, of the more than 770,000 students in the state who qualify for a free or reduced-price lunch at school, less than 40 percent (292,951) participate in school breakfast. In 2010, Illinois missed out on more than \$38 million in federal funds for school breakfast and more than \$12 million for summer meals due to low participation in food programs. The Illinois Commission to End Hunger and No Kid Hungry will help to increase participation in these programs and bring federal funding to Illinois to support these anti-hunger efforts.

“Our focus is on long-term change, the difference between feeding a child today and making sure no child in the U.S. ever goes hungry again,” said Bill Shore, Chairman and CEO of Share Our Strength. “We are pleased to be working with the Greater Chicago Food Depository on the Illinois No Kid Hungry campaign and we believe that together we can end childhood hunger here in Illinois and nationwide.”

The Illinois No Kid Hungry campaign partners will take proven steps to close the school breakfast gap across Illinois. The School Breakfast Challenge will incentivize schools to implement innovative ways of serving school breakfast, such as Breakfast in the Classroom, which makes breakfast part of the academic day.

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Improving youth access to summer meals is another challenge that Illinois No Kid Hungry will address immediately. Currently, the Illinois summer meals program provides kids and teens free nutritious meals to keep them healthy and active during the summer at more than 1,600 sites across the state. However, less than 15 percent (105,653) of kids who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch get free summer meals. The Illinois No Kid Hungry partners will engage in an aggressive outreach campaign in communities across the state to connect young people with the summer nutrition they need to grow physically and academically.

Share Our Strength supports No Kid Hungry partnerships in 16 other states and these campaigns have seen tremendous success. The Partnership to End Childhood Hunger in Maryland has worked to increase the number of children eating summer meals by 7.5 percent since 2008. The Colorado No Kid Hungry campaign, in partnership with Hunger Free Colorado, increased participation in school breakfast by almost 430,000 more meals served after one year of the Colorado School Breakfast Challenge.

With support from lead sponsors Walmart and Jimmy Dean, Share Our Strength is investing more than \$240,000 in the first year of the campaign. The Illinois No Kid Hungry campaign is also sponsored by the Arby's Foundation and supported by Weight Watchers.

"Walmart is proud to sponsor the Illinois No Kid Hungry campaign to help draw attention to the important issue of childhood hunger that many children, families and communities across our state face every day," said Jules Gianneschi, Divisional Senior HR Director of Walmart Stores. "Our contribution is part of Walmart and its Foundation's \$2 billion commitment to eradicate hunger. Our work here today is an important part of that effort."

"At Jimmy Dean, we believe that a great day lies within everyone and we certainly understand that a great day truly starts with a balanced breakfast. Jimmy Dean has made a long-term commitment to No Kid Hungry because more than 16 million children in America don't know where their next meal will come from and we value the opportunity to help support the many families out there who are struggling to put food on the table every day," said Amy Grabow, General Manager, Jimmy Dean.

Share Our Strength's national No Kid Hungry efforts are also supported by core partners ConAgra Foods Foundation, Walmart and the Food Network. Go to <http://il.nokidhungry.org/> to learn more about the partnership. Visit [www.Strength.org](http://www.Strength.org) to learn more about Share Our Strength.

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#### **About Greater Chicago Food Depository**

The Greater Chicago Food Depository, Chicago's food bank, is a nonprofit food distribution and training center providing food for hungry people while striving to end hunger in our community. The Food Depository distributes donated and purchased food through a network of 650 pantries, soup kitchens and shelters to 678,000 adults and children in Cook County every year. Last year, the Food Depository distributed 69 million pounds of nonperishable food and fresh produce, dairy products and meat, the equivalent of 140,000 meals every day. Innovative training programs and initiatives developed by the Food Depository also work to provide men, women and children with the tools necessary to break their individual cycles of poverty. Visit [www.chicagosfoodbank.org](http://www.chicagosfoodbank.org) to learn more.

#### **About Share Our Strength**

Share Our Strength®, a national nonprofit, is ending childhood hunger in America by connecting children with the nutritious food they need to lead healthy, active lives. Through its No Kid Hungry® campaign—a national effort to end childhood hunger in America—Share Our Strength ensures children in need are enrolled in federal nutrition programs, invests in community organizations fighting hunger, teaches families how to cook healthy, affordable meals, and builds public-private partnerships to end hunger, nationally and at the state and city levels. Visit [www.Strength.org](http://www.Strength.org) to learn more.

#### **About Philanthropy at Walmart**

Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are proud to support initiatives that are helping people live better around the globe. In May 2010, Walmart and its Foundation made a historic pledge of \$2 billion through 2015 to fight hunger in the U.S. The Walmart Foundation also supports education, workforce development, environmental sustainability, and health and wellness initiatives. To learn more, visit [www.walmartfoundation.org](http://www.walmartfoundation.org).

#### **About Philanthropy at Jimmy Dean**

Jimmy Dean® believes in nourishing the potential in everyone - especially our children. But hunger and food insecurity is a reality that prevents more than 16 million kids from being their best. As a long-term partner of Share Our Strength, *Jimmy Dean* is proud to support the work of No Kid Hungry on both a national level and locally in their home state of Illinois. Working in tandem with Share Our Strength, *Jimmy Dean* is committed to promoting the benefits of breakfast and making a lasting impact against hunger in Illinois. For more information visit [www.jimmydean.com](http://www.jimmydean.com).